

Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center

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Situation Report for Sunday, July 27, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. - Background Information:

- *Fire activity throughout the state continues to generate concern on the part of many Montana citizens and lots of work for local government officials. Better fire and weather conditions including increased humidity, lighter winds, and lower temperatures have contributed to a successful response to this week's wildfires. The lack of available resources early on taxed "initial attack" response around the state. Successful efforts on the part of incident management proved to be fruitful in the Missouri Breaks Complex, Slim Sam, Long Mountain, and Kelsey fires. Demobilization has or is currently taking place at the sites of those fires. However, fire managers still believe another shift in conditions could easily create a long summer siege (possibly rivaling that of 2000).*

II. - Current Montana Fire Conditions: (as reported to NRCC *July 26, 2003 (2230)*)

Light initial attack – 11 new fires for 9,149 acres

- *Flathead Area Command (Mann) has been ordered to manage large fires on the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Forest.*
 - *Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Stam), 8,797 acres, 0% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana.*
 - *Wedge Canyon – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Bennett), 18,250 acres, 5% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.*
 - *Trapper Creek Complex – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Raley) transitioning with Fire Use Team (Cook), 16,300 acres, 30% contained, This Complex is made up the Trapper Creek (14,470 acres – 23% contained), Paul Bunyan (300 acres – 100% contained) and Wolf Gun (1,530 acres – 35% contained) fires located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, MT.*
- *Black Frog Complex - Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye), 7,938 acres, 20% contained. This Complex is made up of the Blackwall fire (4,966 acres), located 32 miles N of Salmon, Idaho and Frog Pond (2,972 acres), located 34*

miles S of Hamilton, Montana.

- *Ross Creek – 145 acres, 30% contained, 20 air miles SW of Troy, Montana.*
- *Hidden Lake – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 3,500 acres, 25% contained, 30 miles W of Dillon, Montana.*
- *Big Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope), 1,339 acres, 50% contained, 4 miles NW of Victor, Montana.*
- *Little Salmon Creek Complex – This 250 acre, 0% contained, Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex, made up of the Pagoda (100 acres) and the Little Salmon (150 acres), is being managed to accomplish resource objectives. A Fire Use Management Team has been ordered.*
- *Missouri Breaks Complex - Type 2 Incident Management Team (Gray), 130,927 acres, 100% contained. This Complex is made up of the Big Coulee (29,494 acres), Ghost Coulee (959 acres – 100% contained), Germaine (66,515 acres) and Indian (33,959 acres) fires. Complex located 35 miles NW of Jordan, Montana.*

***STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA...UPDATED
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT
1000 AM MDT SUN JUL 27 2003***

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - areas of smoke. Mainly glacier region. Slight chance of Showers and thunderstorms. Mainly over southern mountains. Partly Cloudy. Highs 85 to 95. 95 to 100 lower valleys far northwest.

Tonight. areas of smoke north. Slight chance of evening showers and thunderstorms mainly over southern mountains. Partly cloudy. Lows 46 to 56.

Monday - mostly sunny. Highs 88 to 98. Around 100 lower valleys Far northwest.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today. Mostly sunny. Highs in the mid 80s to lower 90s.

Tonight. Mostly clear. Lows in the 50s.

Monday. Sunny. Highs in the mid 80s to mid 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today. Partly cloudy. Isolated afternoon showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 70s to upper 80s.

Tonight. Mostly clear. Lows in the 50s but in the 40s in the Higher valleys.

Monday. Sunny. Highs 90 to 95 but in the 80s in the mountains.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today. Partly cloudy with a chance of thunderstorms south. Mostly

Sunny north. Highs in the mid 80s to lower 90s.

Tonight. mostly clear. Lows in the mid 50s to mid 60s.

Monday. sunny. Highs in the 90s.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

<u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u>		<u>Date Filed</u>
Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Level I Fire Restrictions)	7/17/03
<u>Fire Restrictions and Closures</u>		<u>Effective Date</u>
Northwestern Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 21, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 23, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 18, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 18, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone	Stage I Restrictions (Billings)	July 18, 2003
	Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)	July 21, 2003
	<i>Stage I Restrictions (Miles City)</i>	<i>July 26, 2003</i>

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State Declaration:

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

FEMA Declarations:

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 23rd, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire. DNRC is contemplating a request for a FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration for Flathead, Sanders, Lake, and Lincoln Counties.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 25th, 2003 for Flathead County's Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

Requests for State Assistance:

- Montana DES is supplying two individuals to Garfield County serving as Agency Representatives, assisting with disaster recovery efforts. In response to the threat posed by the Missouri Breaks Complex, last evening a third MT-DES Agency Representative was deployed to work directly with Petroleum County officials.
- On July 23rd, FEMA announced the approval of Montana DNRC's request for federal fire management assistance to help fight the Missouri Breaks Complex fires. This authorization makes FEMA funding available to pay 75% of the state's eligible fight fighting expenses.
- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and approximately 20 people. One helicopter is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula.
- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is operating at Activation Level III with extended hours (0700-1900 every day).
- The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1900-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

Road Closures: Information is current as of 07/26/03

Southwest

Montana Highway 43 and U.S. 93, closed recently because of the Black Frog fire complex, will reopen at noon Friday, July 25. The roads will close again at 9 p.m. Friday, and then be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., daily for the foreseeable future, officials said. Forest Service officials have closed the Gibbonsville Road from where it enters the Salmon-Challis National Forest to where it leaves the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest.

Northwest

The Wedge Canyon fire, 6-miles south of the Canadian boarder, and the Robert fire, between Coram and West Glacier, are actively requiring the continued closure of Secondary 486 to all but essential traffic.

Reported Major Fire Activity:

Black Frog Complex:

Residences threatened: 75	Commercial Property: 1	Outbuildings/Other: 10
Estimated Cost: \$2,700,000	% contained: 20%	

Robert Fire:

Residences threatened: 100	Commercial Property: 24	Outbuildings/Other: 36
Estimated Cost: \$	% contained: 0	

Wedge Canyon:

Residences threatened: 100	Commercial Property: 0	Outbuildings/Other: 0
Estimated Cost: \$2,100,000	% contained: 5%	

Missouri Breaks Complex:

Residences Threatened:	Commercial Property:	Outbuildings/Other: 8
Estimated Cost: \$2,400,000	% contained: 100%	Total structures lost: 8

Web Links:

Glacier National Park Fire Management:

<http://www.nps.gov/glac/resources/fires.htm>